



Local cranberry grower Alvin Crowell looked over the bounty of berries at his bogs off West Street last Saturday as spectators viewed the process on a warm autumn day. He expects to harvest a crop of 2,000 barrels in Duxbury.

## Cranberry Growers to Get Relief

Local cranberry growers will get some needed assistance from the federal government with passage of the final version of the Fiscal 2001 Agriculture Appropriations Bill which contains \$50 million to assist those who have suffered significant losses because of adverse market conditions in recent years.

Jeff LeFleur, executive director of the Cape Cod Cranberry Growers' Association said the funds will include \$20 million in direct cash payments to growers based on their 1999 crop to help meet financial obligations in the short term such as mortgages and equipment costs. The USDA Farm Service Agency will be responsible for the distribution of payments. Another \$30 million will be in

the form of purchase of cranberry juice concentrate and frozen berries in an effort to remove one million barrels of cranberries from the surplus.

"It will help them ride out the short term. Ultimately it will be up to the industry to bring supply and demand into balance," he said.

There will need to be checks to see that production is under control and new markets are created, he said.

The Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association includes several local growers including Stan Merry and Alvin Crowell. Last year revenues for growers were \$30 million compared with \$70 million in 1998 and \$120 million in 1997.

An estimated 3 million surplus barrels are expected by in-

dustry officials following this year's harvest. As a result of oversupply, prices paid to cranberry growers may drop to as low as \$10 a barrel for the current crop.

The Association warns that many in the state are concerned the development pressures will force growers to sell their land. Already growers have had to cut back on labor and equipment.

LeFleur said all the cranberry growing regions in the country are facing the crunch including Wisconsin. He said change is afoot and in the future the industry may see consolidation and changes in production.

He said while the federal aid will help. "It certainly isn't a savior for the long term."